Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS PRIORITY

CONFIDENTIAL STATE 019598

FOR AMBASSADOR MURPHY FROM SOBER

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ETRD

SUBJECT: ARAB BOYCOTT

- 1. WE HAVE BEEN IN TOUCH WITH INTERNATIONAL HARVESTER (IH) GENERAL ATTORNEY (O'MEARA) CONCERNING REPORT THAT IH FACES SHORT DEADLINE IN HANDLING RENEWAL OF BOYCOTT QUESTIONNAIRE.
- 2. O'MEARA, WHO HANDLES BOYCOTT ISSUE FOR IH, WAS NOT AWARE OF CONTINUING PROBLEM WITH RESPECT TO BOYCOTT QUESTIONNAIRE. IN FACT, HE THOUGHT THAT CENTRAL BOYCOTT OFFICE (CBO) HAD BEEN SATISFIED (OR AT LEAST DIVERTED FROM ITS INVESTIGATION OF IH) BY CAREFULLY WORDED IH RESPONSES DELIVERED BEFORE EFFECTIVE DATE OF NEW EXPORT ADMINISTRATION ACT REGULATIONS. IN THESE RESPONSES, IH MADE CLEAR TO CBO THAT IT COULD NOTANSWERINQUIRY CONCONFIDENTIAL

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CERNING IH BOARD MEMBER ASSOCIATIONS WITH ANY JEWISH GROUP.

3. O'MEARA PLANS TO DETERMINE THROUGH IH REPRESENTATIVES/AGENTS WHETHER COMPANY FACES SERIOUS RISK OF BEING BLACKLISTED OVER ISSUE OF NON-RESPONSIVENESS TO BOYCOTT QUESTIONNAIRE.

4. IH WOULD LIKE USG TO TAKE NO ACTION ON ITS BEHALF UNTIL IT CAN CLARIFY SITUATION AND CONSULT WITH DEPARTMENT ON STRATEGY FOR ACTION IF ACTION SHOULD BE NEEDED. IN LIGHT

OF THIS REQUEST, EMBASSY SHOULD NOT MAKE ANY APPROACH ON IH'S BEHALF.

5. WE HAVE MADE CLEAR TO IH THE CONCERN WE HAVE THAT U.S. FIRMS NOT BE SUBJECT TO BLACKLISTING BECAUSE FOREIGN COMPETITORS ARE ABLE TO TRIGGER ISSUANCE OF BOYCOTT QUESTIONNAIRES BY MAKING ACCUSATIONS AGAINST THEM TO BOYCOTT OFFICES. WE OFFERED TO BE OF HELP IN ANY WAY WE COULD TO AVOID A PATTERN OF BOYCOTT ACTIONS DISADVANTAGEOUS TO IH AND OTHER U.S. COMPANIES SIMILARLY SITUATED. VANCE

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